discernment which is communicated by faith. Or, he supposes, that God may interpose among the physical agents beyond that limit to which human sagacity can trace the operation of law. He calls on us to observe how, in all human affairs, we can trace the actual agency of law but a very little way back. Natural powers, as we follow them, become so complicated in their operation, that God might easily interfere with them, and change their operation without the possibility of his presence being detected. He might, for instance, change the laws which regulate the weather, and send a storm or calm at any given place or time; or he might modify the laws by which the living functions of the human body are regulated, and send health or disease, and no man be able to say whether there has been an interposition or not.*

We are unwilling to cast a shade of doubt upon these beautiful views. It does seem, however, as if the first were scarcely consistent with the correct idea of prayer. To suppose that there is a causal connexion, does not leave that discretion to fche Divine Being in answering prayer which it is most needful that he should exercise. Nor does the analogy of nature furnish us with a single instance of a mental feeling causally influencing an object or event with which it has no physical connexion. It may be safely said of the second view, that it never can be directly disproved. It takes us into a region in which, if proof cannot easily be discovered, it is certain that disproof cannot be found. Both theories may be fairly held as serving the purpose intended by their author, and as showing that it is possible for God to answer prayer. It is a favourite maxim with Chalmers, and one of importance, that an hypothesis may be fitted, when it serves no other purpose, to take the edge off a plausible argument. The objector, in this case, insists (as the major proposition in the syllogism) that God cannot

answer prayer in consistency with his usual procedure; and Chalmers deprives this general proposition, and therefore the conclusion, of all force, by showing that there are at least two conceivable ways by which God can grant the requests of his creatures, in perfect accordance with the principles of his providence.

But is it necessary to resort to either of these ingenious theories ? Is there not a more obvious means by which God

* Chalmers' Natural Theology, B. v. c. iii.